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New Factor Discouraging Attack by USSR

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. The degree of apprehension [REDACTED] in the US that the USSR may strike suddenly and open World War III is surprising [REDACTED]. Certainly there is less apprehension in Switzerland and in Germany and France [REDACTED]. People [REDACTED] in the US seem to have an exaggerated opinion of the over-all Soviet potential and to lack a realization of certain current Soviet political and economic weaknesses.
2. Soviet leaders are very astute and recognize that they need time to organize the satellite nations and to build up maximum strength in the USSR itself. Then too, their perimeter adventures are still paying off to some extent and are certainly a source of drains and strains on the western world.
3. But the most important deterring factor in the picture today is the realization by the political leaders that once in a major war the national power would more and more pass into the hands of the military from those of the civil or political leaders. Stalin had assiduously built up a rather slight revolutionary military record into a legend that brought him acceptance as a Generalissimo, had carefully eliminated potential rivals among the military leaders, and was able to keep on top despite a situation which many of the military leaders may now realize, too late, was made to order for a seizure of power by the military. These same military leaders, who will be running the military establishment for some years to come, may already have resolved not to pass up a second time such an opportunity if it should present itself. At least, that possibility must always be one of the factors Malenkov must consider in making his calculations.
4. Unlike Stalin, Malenkov cannot convincingly lay claim to military genius. He even looks ridiculous in a uniform. His chief cronies are political rather than military. Malenkov doubtless realized this glaring deficiency in his equipment and background and knows it would handicap him in any effort to carry off the dual role of political and military leader during a protracted war, a qualification so necessary to continued wartime power.

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in an oriental or western monolithic state. Years of build-up would be required to remedy this vulnerability. Therefore Malenkov and his political inner group are highly unlikely to take any steps in the near future intentionally leading to a major war such as would follow an attack on Western Europe or on the US unless the US and Western Europe should become so weak or disunited as to offer the USSR a target of quick, easy conquest in Western Europe.

5. My advice would be to meet, confer and discuss with the Soviets at every opportunity, but do not trust their motives, intentions or anything they say; at the same time keeping the US and Western Europe as strong as possible. The Soviets understand only power.

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